



# DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

## INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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### SUCCESS OF ALIEN GAME BIRDS STUDIED IN U. S.

It's even-Stephen as to the success or failure of liberations of chukar and Hungarian partridges in various parts of the country, according to studies made by the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior. Next to the ring-necked pheasant, which has become naturalized and has done exceptionally well, the chukar and the Hungarian partridges are the most popular non-native species among sportsmen.

Investigation revealed that 544 private game breeders raised ring-necked pheasants last year, 267 raised chukar partridges, and 64 raised Hungarian partridges.

Though extensive plantings of chukar partridges have been made since 1893, when 5 pairs of birds were brought from India and released in Illinois, there is still need for further basic information before making liberations, Service officials declared. They pointed out that while many plantings were successful, many more were failures.

Both the chukar and Hungarian partridge have been released in almost all the States. These popular exotic game birds were introduced by sportsmen when the native species became depleted and were extirpated from their former range.

The introduction of exotic species into the United States has been a source of argument among sportsmen and naturalists, some contending the introduced birds will interfere with the native stock, especially quail, and others that they will not. The various State commissions reporting conditions were unanimous in the opinion that to the best of their knowledge no serious competition is evident.

Fish and Wildlife Service officials express the opinion that as a general policy results will be more satisfactory if sportsmen and conservation agencies give more consideration to the improvement of the environment of native game than if they seek a solution in indiscriminately liberating artificially propagated foreign species. The exotic species, however, are desirable in areas where the native species are no longer adaptable.

Chukar partridges, which seem to thrive in the more arid areas and have been known to nest on the Mohave desert, have been liberated in comparatively large numbers in recent years in the following States: California, 9,500; Missouri, 2,000; Minnesota, 13,900 (including some 12,000 in 1939); Nebraska, 4,000; Wisconsin, 3,845; and Washington 681 (in 1938). Other liberations have also been made in 28 other States.

Records show that at least 150,000 Hungarian partridges have been released in all but a few States since the birds were first introduced from Europe in the latter half of the 18th century. Success or partial success of the stock has been recorded in 14 States. This species has had phenomenal success in the southern part of the Prairie Provinces of Canada and in the Northwest and North-central States of the United States from Ohio to Washington.

While both the chukar and Hungarian are suited to arid climates, the Hungarian apparently can better withstand severe cold and considerable snow. Results of efforts to establish the Hungarian in the Atlantic coastal States and in the Southeast and Southwest are not encouraging.

Service officials declare that the ultimate success of the chukar partridge in this country is still in doubt, but it appears to have a chance of becoming established at least in the arid areas of some States west of the Mississippi River.